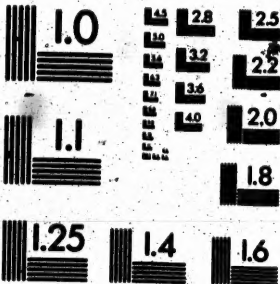


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CHARGE

TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF QUEBEC.

TO

A
C H A R G E

DELIVERED

TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF QUEBEC.

IN AUGUST, 1803.

BY JACOB MOUNTAIN, D. D.
LORD BISHOP OF QUEBEC.

QUEBEC:

Printed by JOHN NEILSON, NO 3 Mountain-street; 1803.

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To the Clergy of the Diocese of Quebec.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

I HAVE not thought it expedient to publish the following Charge, in compliance with your request communicated to me by DR. STUART: but, that I may not seem to neglect your wishes, I have caused a few Copies to be printed; one of which will be presented to each of you.

You cannot but observe many defects in it, as a composition. Wishing to make myself, previously, as well acquainted as I could with the present state of this extensive DIOCESE, I did not write it 'till my return to Montreal; and could not then bestow upon it the time which the subject deserved. But for the principles which it contains I offer no apology. I should think

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that I failed alike in duty, and in decency, if I proposed, as a rule for your conduct, any thing which had not received the maturest consideration, and the most deliberate assent of my own mind.

THE subject matter of the Charge, therefore, I do not hesitate to recommend to your serious attention: And I pray God that it may minister, through His blessing, both to your edification and your usefulness.

I am, my Reverend Brethren,
Your affectionate and faithful
servant,

J. QUEBEC.

SANS BRUIT, 30th August, }
1803.

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MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

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WHEN I look to the small number assembled upon this occasion, and consider the length of way which some of you have travelled, I have need of reflection to satisfy me respecting the propriety of calling you together. But reflection convinces me of the expediency, indeed of the obligation, of adhering, in our practice, to those venerable Institutions of our Church, to which, among other advantages, it owes both the excellency of its order, and the stability of its discipline. Forms of this kind are not empty and unmeaning ceremonies; they are not the work of weak, or vain men; but are in their essence

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and tendency, of genuine importance; the result of experienced wisdom, and consummate prudence.

On your part, I am satisfied, when it is considered that, from regard to your convenience, I omitted upon a former occasion this branch of my proper functions, and that I do not impose what I have not been willing more than to share with you, there will be found no reluctance to the performance of this essential, and indispensable part of your duty.

The view that I have just taken of the Country, and of the situation of the Clergy, in the different parts of the two Provinces, as it could not but increase the strong sense I entertain of the imperfect and very insufficient state of our Establishment; so has it impressed my mind with a renewed and lively feeling of the difficulties and discomforts to which you are individually subjected.

Different obstacles to the attainment of that consideration in Society, to which you are justly entitled, and to that success in your Ministry, which

which I trust you have seriously at heart, naturally arise out of the different situations in which you are respectively placed.

The members of the Romish Church, from whom we must not expect a fair and candid examination of the points of difference between us, consider us as Schismatics, vicious in belief, and erroneous in practice; endeavouring to propagate Heresy, and subvert the only true mean of Salvation that is offered to mankind. With them therefore it must always be difficult for us to obtain that respect and consideration, which they think due to the Ministers of what they esteem the true and Catholic Religion.

The Protestant Sectaries, on the contrary, consider us, as they do the members of the Church of Rome, as still the slaves of authority, and the advocates of corruption; as enemies to freedom of opinion, and to Religious liberty; governed by puerile superstitions, and devoted to unessential forms: Neither, therefore, can we expect from them that degree of estimation, which

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they think only due to persons of more enlarged, and more liberal habits of thought.

Industry in enquiring, and candor in deciding, better information, and more unbiassed judgment, might correct the opinion, and subdue the prejudices of both parties; and shew them the real excellence of the Church of England, happily placed, in the true medium, between extravagant, and dangerous extremes.

But industry in enquiring, and candor in deciding, are qualities, unhappily, as rare, as they are precious: And as it is impossible to entertain any reasonable hope of a sudden change of opinion in our favour, we have only to consider, how, though we cannot remove the prejudices, we may yet soften the asperity of those who are opposed to us.

Permit me, therefore, my Reverend Brethren, to observe to you the effect which the observation and experience of these prejudices in the minds of others, ought in all reason, to have upon your own.

First,

First, they should prompt you to free your own minds, as much as possible, from all prejudice, and to adopt, upon all occasions, the most charitable and liberal principles of thinking, and judging.

Secondly, they should generate that noble and dignified ambition, which aspires "to overcome evil with good;" to disarm enmity, by a gentle and conciliating demeanour, by a correct and blameless behaviour: to enforce respect, by the exercise of more conspicuous prudence, more enlightened piety, and more unwearied zeal: In a word, to add to superior knowledge, superior goodness; to convince by the soundness of your reasoning, those who cannot be won; and to win by the kindness of your deportment, those who will not be convinced.

As in the various modifications of the human mind varieties of opinion will inevitably arise upon every question that can be proposed to the human understanding, nothing can be more palpably unreasonable and absurd, than to

persecute and hate each other, because we differ, more widely than we need to do, upon points, where it is scarcely possible that we should all think exactly alike; and where it is to be presumed, or at least to be hoped, that we all endeavour to think as rightly as we can: As from the condition of our nature, we are all liable to error, nothing can be more preposterous, than to condemn men without mercy, merely because we are persuaded that they err!

A truly philosophic and well governed mind, adheres to its opinions with firmness, because it has adopted them upon fair examination, and with proper caution; but adheres to them without obstinacy, because it is nevertheless conscious of sharing this universal liability to error. It is prepared to listen patiently, and with candour, to all that can be advanced in favour of an opposite persuasion: and however distinctly perceiving fallacy in argument, or prevercity in judgment, never loses sight of Christian forbearance, nor treats its adversary with asperity or contempt. On the contrary, they who take up opinions upon trust,

trust,—influenced by imagination, impelled by passion, or passively submitting to the authority of others,—who chuse without enquiry, and decide without knowledge; these persons are always most firmly fixed in the notion of their own infallibility, and most inaccessible to every species of argument: Nothing is so obstinate as ignorance.

Upon these principles, in which I am persuaded, you will perfectly agree with me, you will found a system of conduct at once consistent with a just attachment to our Church, and a steady endeavour to maintain, in all their integrity, her Worship and her Discipline; and with that due degree of Christian benevolence, that liberal indulgence, and that exemplary moderation, which leave to others the free exercise of their own judgment, and which may be disposed, in all things not essential, to compromise even with their prejudices.

Whatever difficulties may arise in the discharge of your duty, from the present imperfect state of our Establishment, on the one
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hand, or from the variety of Religious persuasions, and the clashing Sects with which you are surrounded, on the other, the greatest and most formidable enemy that you have to encounter, is that daring spirit of Infidelity, which, assuming the name, and degrading the character of Philosophy, arrogates to itself the exclusive privilege, of enlightening, and perfecting the human race.

The modes of attack upon the Church of England which have been adopted, are various and opposite; and such as demand the most unremitted vigilance, and the most steady exertion, on the part of her defenders. You cannot therefore be too much upon your guard against them.

They who teach these imposing doctrines, possess advantages which it is, in many cases, very difficult for us to countervail. They who attack, have always the advantage of those who defend. They who object to any series of arguments, or facts, have a much easier office than they who undertake to vindicate, and support them.

them. Men are much more readily induced to place implicit confidence in the force of their own understandings, to reject all restraint as oppressive, to resist all authority as a violation of natural liberty, to follow the guidance of reason, as the sole arbiter of right and wrong, to yield to the impulses of passion, as to the proper springs of action, implanted by nature herself, than—persuaded to admit that they are weak, and blind, and corrupted creatures, that of themselves they can do nothing, that due submission to established authorities, and reverence for “the Powers that be,” is among their primary duties, that their reason is a very fallible guide, that they stand in need of better direction, to lead them in the paths of security and peace, that humility, meekness, and long suffering, are qualities that ennoble, and exalt their nature, that self denial is the corner stone of the fabrick of human virtue, and that their only true wisdom consists, in restraining the impetuosity of their passions, and submitting the pride of their reason, to the Law and Will of God.

I need not insist particularly upon this subject. Every person knows how much more acceptable (with the bulk of mankind,) is flattery, than reproof: how much more welcome he who would soothe the vanity of the heart, than he who would correct its depravity.

Must we then sink under the pressure of these difficulties, and discouragements? Shall our zeal in the cause of truth, give way to a pusillanimous despondency? Shall we make no effort to stem the torrent which threatens to overwhelm us?—I hope better things from you my Reverend Brethren, who, I trust, are duly prepared, “to fight the good fight of faith.”

The energies of a well constructed, and well regulated mind, rise with the difficulties that oppose it. In the conduct of human affairs, the brave and the generous never feel their ardour more animated, or their powers more active, than when they are placed in situations of more than ordinary difficulty and danger: In many instances, they are known to covet such situations, that they may find occasion more
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conspicuously to display the zeal with which they are inspired, to carry into effect some great and laudable undertaking, and to entitle themselves at once to reputation and regard. In the exercise of your Divine Office, there are motives for exertion of infinitely greater force, there are encouragements to perseverance, of infinitely greater power and worth, than any that can attach to merely temporal, and secular concerns. They who contend for the *eternal interests* of their fellow creatures, should surely, under the most accumulated difficulties, suffer no abatement of their ardour; They who in the conflict in which they are engaged, can look up, with steadfast hope, to the aid of an Almighty Power, should feel, surely, no diminution of their confidence, or courage. Of all men living, the servants and soldiers of Jesus Christ, have most reason for confidence and courage; most reason for loyalty, and attachment to their Master; most reason to be indefatigable, fearless, in the cause of their fellow creatures.

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But, trusting to Divine Providence for assistance and support, you must nevertheless exert your own strength to the utmost; and avail yourselves of every help, that industry, activity, and circumspection, can supply, not only to make good your defence, but to be "more than Conquerors." in the cause of truth.

As knowledge is no longer given by immediate inspiration, the defect must, as far as it can, be supplied by human learning. If you would confute gainsayers, if you aspire to convince the infidel, you must yourselves be masters of your argument, "Workmen who need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

I need not remind you, how necessary it is that you be well acquainted with the state of the world antecedent to the Christian Dispensation; that you go deeply into the history of the different Schools of Philosophy; and explore the different tenets which they held; the different doctrines which they taught.

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There is nothing that so strikingly, and so completely, shews the insufficiency of human reason, and the necessity of Divine Revelation, as the extravagant, and contradictory opinions, entertained by the wisest and most learned of the Heathen Sages, respecting the Deity; and the fruitless efforts, by which they attempted to develope His Nature, and their own: There is nothing that shews this more strongly, than the total ignorance upon these points, the gross, and barbarous superstitions, the shocking and abominable corruptions, of the great mass of the people, who constituted those Empires, which have been the wonder, and admiration of the world.

To knowledge of this description, must be added, an intimate acquaintance, and familiar converse with the *Evidences* of the Truth of our Holy Religion.

To the particular sources from which this necessary knowledge is to be derived, it is neither necessary, nor indeed proper, upon the present occasion, that I should point your attention.

tention By the judgment and experience of some whom I see among you, I might myself be instructed: And the many admirable publications which the exigencies of the times have called forth from the Clergy of the Church of England, must be too well known, even to the youngest among you, to need any particular enumeration from me. I must however indulge my own feelings, by a particular mention of the acute, and perspicuous Paley; and of the venerable and amiable Porteus: and by referring those who wish for fuller information upon these points, to a late very valuable work, of the learned and ~~at~~ Bishop of Lincoln.

That many sects have found footing in this Infant Diocese, that itinerant Teachers of every denomination have met a welcome reception from the people, (and more especially in the Upper-Province) is, no doubt, in a great measure to be ascribed to the yet insufficient state of our Establishment; and to the paucity of regular Ministers of our Church: but the boldness with which error is propagated, and the

the rapidity with which it spreads, have yet another, and a most prolific source, in the radical defect of knowledge in those self-appointed Teachers, who overrun the Country; and in the idle curiosity, and easy credulity, of those who hear them.

A great deal more is necessary to the due understanding of Writings of so remote a date as the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, than many people will readily imagine. Not to speak of the necessity of possessing the learned languages,—with which few of these persons, I believe, pretend to have any acquaintance,—in the beautifully simple, and lucid lessons, even of our Saviour Himself, there are perpetual allusions to the Religion, the Laws, the History, the Government, the Manners, the Customs, the Traditions, the Corruptions, of the Jewish Nation; to their domestic Habits, their Climate, the natural Productions of their Country; without some knowledge of which, the expounder of the Gospels will find himself frequently perplexed. But to the understanding of the E-

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pistles, a larger scope of information is necessary. It is not only with the History of the Jews, but with that also of all the Nations in which the early Churches were planted, that the Teacher of the Christian Religion should be intimately acquainted. He should know the modes of Belief, the species of Idolatry, the nature of the antient Corruptions, the character of the subsequent Heresies, connected with the condition of these Churches severally; and consequently, the Errors of different descriptions, the Deviations from the true Faith, of greater or less obliquity, which it was the object of the respective writers, to oppose and correct.

Without this preliminary knowledge, the Writings of St. Paul, in particular, are in a great degree unintelligible; and become the ground, in the hands of presumption and fanaticism, of endless, and most pernicious error.

Even by the confession of an Apostle of our Lord Himself, there are in these Writings, " Things hard to be understood; which they
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“ who are unlearned, and unstable, wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.” The Apostle speaks of what actually existed when he wrote; but, it is highly probable, with a prophetic allusion to that future period, when, from the lapse of time, with increasing difficulties in the Writings themselves, and necessarily with more imperfect information in those who should interpret them, the danger of wresting them to destructive purposes, must inevitably be increased.

Yet these are the very Writings, upon which the most inexperienced, and illiterate Teachers, take upon them peremptorily to decide: from these, with a bold and unhesitating spirit of interpretation, they draw the leading Doctrines, upon which, according to them, Redemption exclusively depends: upon these they found their infallible system of saving Gospel Faith, and genuine Christian practice. The Mechanic deserts his occupation, the Artificer throws away his tools, and steps forth from his shop, a fearless, and as he conceives, unerring expositor,

tor, of that which nothing less than direct and immediate Inspiration, can make it possible for him to understand. He handles without doubt, or caution, those abstruse doctrines, which the learned and the wise, do not presume to touch, but with reverence, and diffidence; he deals around his censures upon all regular Teachers, and all authorized Divines; and openly claims to be the only true Expounder of the vital Gospel; the only Evangelical Preacher of the Word of Life!—Unhappily he obtains too easy credit: the folly, and arrogance of his pretensions, are, if possible, exceeded by the credulity, and dupery, of the unhappy, and deluded people who attend him.

How you shall best withstand this increasing evil, how best secure your people against the snare that is thus spread for them, is a question well worthy of serious attention. Not by persecution or oppression, certainly; not by irritation and enmity; not by unqualified contempt. Far other methods will become your character; and it is from far other methods, that you must ultimately hope for success.

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Wherever great evil prevails, wherever there is much to be corrected, the wisest, and the safest way, is, always to begin, by examining, and correcting ourselves.

Let us therefore, in the first place, endeavour to discover, how far the evil under our consideration, may, in any degree, be attributable to the conduct of the regular Clergy; and how far it may be ultimately corrected, by any alteration in that conduct.

We all know the progress that in the times which followed the Reformation was made by those principles, and that mode of thinking, and acting, which was denominated Puritanical: we know the excess to which these things were pushed, and the consequences by which they were followed. We yet see these principles, alive and active, in some parts of the world: and have opportunities of observing them at no great distance from us. The disgust which they occasioned, in the minds of many, and the alienation from true piety, which followed that disgust, need not be pointed out to your

recollection. All that I am now concerned to remark to you, is, the effect that the observation of that disgust produced, upon some, among those of our Clergy who adhered to a system which they conceived to be at once more suited to the Word, and Will of God, and to the present, and future happiness, of his creatures.

Desirous of receding, as far as they conveniently could, from the repulsive doctrines, and the rigid discipline of the Puritans, they overlooked, or overleaped the line marked out by prudence, and propriety. They rushed to the contrary extreme. Doctrinal preaching fell almost into disuse with them: and learned, and logical, and purely argumentative, moral disquisitions, generally succeeded. A corresponding error took place in manners. Liberality, degenerated into laxity. Eager to retreat from the sour severity, and unbending stiffness, which distinguished the Puritans, they, in fact, gradually deserted to the ranks of the world. Dreading the imputation of cant and hypocrisy, they ceased almost entirely to introduce into their conversation topicks of piety, and devotion: and fear-

fearful of being thought awkward incumbrances upon society, or of being thunned as rigorous censors of gaiety, they imperceptibly melted themselves down into the common mass; and were easily led not greatly to discountenance the idea, that whatever modes of life, whatever recreations, amusements, pleasures, were allowed to other men, might justly be considered as allowable also to the Clergy. The fence was broken down, the separation forgotten, the distinction lost.

This, my Reverend Brethren, was a fatal error. This opened the way to innumerable abuses, to mischievous levities, to degrading compliances, to general dissipation, to the loss of reverence, of confidence, of esteem.

The opportunity was not neglected, by the adversaries of the Establishment. Labourers of various denominations, soon stepped into the harvest; which the regular, and domestic servants, of the Great Master, had thus, in many places, thrown open for their reception: some, no doubt, sincere enthusiasts, some interested pretenders,

tenders, some designing hypocrites. Here you had "zeal without knowledge," there acuteness without honesty. The sheep of Christ were divided between blind guides, who led them into wide and endless wanderings from the fold; and artful dissemblers, who had no other object, but to enrich themselves by sharing the fleece. While the true Shepherds too often slumbered at their posts; or were deterred, by false shame, from evincing to the world, their superior qualifications, for the duties of their Office.

Something of the same feelings, and of similar conduct, modified according to the alteration of times, and circumstances, it is to be feared, still exists among us.

The distortion which has been given to the simple graces of Gospel Truth, by the violent, and ~~erring~~ zeal of modern Enthusiasts; and the extravagant, and outrageous mode of declamation, which they have dignified with the name of Evangelical Preaching; their pretensions to superior sanctity, to exclusive illumination, to electing grace, in some cases to immediate inspiration,

spiration, have created disgust, in men of sober minds, and sound understandings, of genuine humility, and unaffected piety, which has too often driven them, unawares, to the contrary extreme.

For fear of being thought Methodists, they have scarcely ventured to appear Religious. Shrinking from the imputation of Fanaticism, they have sometimes incurred that of indifference. Observing the mischiefs of ascribing every thing to the efficacy of Faith, they have almost seemed to ascribe every thing to the efficacy of works. And lest they should be thought to affect the violence and rant of the Conventicle, they have sunk into a cold, and dry, and lifeless, mode of preaching; neither calculated to excite attention, nor to impress conviction on the heart. Their discourses too, correct in language, clear in arrangement, conclusive in argument, have yet been but too often little more than ingenious Essays upon the nature of *virtue*, and the true character of *morals*; overlooking in a great measure,

sure, the nature of *Religion*, and the peculiar and characteristic Doctrines of *Christianity*.

These, my Brethren, are general observations. It is my earnest hope that they are not, and never will be, justly applicable to us. Uninfluenced by any exterior circumstances, you will, I trust, feel it to be your duty to preach the entire Gospel of Jesus Christ: to withhold from the people nothing that can augment their knowledge, or increase their faith; that can contribute to their edification, or to their instruction in righteousness.

Our Blessed Saviour did not come into the world as a mere Lecturer in morals. He did indeed teach a more pure and perfect morality, than the world had hitherto known: He made men better acquainted with the Nature and Attributes of the Supreme Being: He brought life and immortality to light:—These were great and glorious discoveries:—But this was not the whole, nor the principle of the advantages derived from His appearing in the flesh. Man was a fallen, a sinful, a corrupted crea-

creature. Of what avail was it to him, who was the slave of irregular appetites, and imperious passions, to have a degree of purity and sanctity pointed out to his observation, which his feeble powers, and degraded propensities, made it utterly impossible for him to attain? How was he benefitted by a superiour knowledge of the Attributes of God, when that knowledge could only serve to shew him to himself as the object of a just indignation to the Most High? What comfort was he to derive from the prospect of an eternal existence, when his own conscience assured him, that he was entitled only to endless misery and ruin?

No, it is not by this part of the Christian scheme alone, great and glorious as it is, that the sinner is to be "converted from the error of his ways;" that the corrupted mind is "renewed unto Holiness;" that "the contrite and broken heart is bound up, and healed;" that faith, and hope, spring up in the bosom; and charity, purity, and sanctity, follow in the conduct and practice, and bear fruit unto life eternal.

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The welcome Doctrines, of the Grace of God, which leadeth to repentance; of the Atonement made for the sins of the penitent, by the Blood of Christ; of the assistance of the Holy Ghost, to guide us into all truth, and sanctify us in heart and life; to support us under difficulties, to purify us by trials, to raise us, after lapses and errors; these, are the peculiar and characteristic doctrines of Christianity; which alone can give men confidence towards God; which, through all ages, have been the comfort of the penitent, the joy of the pious, the strength of the weak, the solace of the miserable: This is the Gospel which was preached to the poor; that is, to the great bulk of mankind: this it is, to which they will listen with eagerness, which they will follow with gladness, to which alone they will cleave, with the fondness of a determined, and a settled affection.

These Doctrines, therefore, it will become You to endeavour to rescue from the disgrace, and contempt, which has been brought upon them, by the wretched cant of illiterate Enthusiasts,

fiasts, and the wild ravings of designing hypocrites. To rescue them,—not by leaving them to cold neglect, and endeavouring to supply their place by lectures, merely moral, which set before the people, in a series of learned argument, the relative and social duties of the man, and the citizen; but by freeing them from that opprobrious mass of errors, with which they have unhappily been mixed up; and bringing them, in their original strength and purity, home to the understandings, and the hearts of your people.

By You, my Reverend Brethren, I cannot possibly be mistaken.—By You it will not be imagined, that I am depreciating the moral precepts of the Gospel; or dispensing with the necessity of good works: You will understand me to mean, that, though *these* must be strongly, and incessantly inculcated, as essential to Salvation, yet, that the *doctrines* to which I have alluded, must lay the firm foundation of the Christians faith, and hope.—Separated, neither the one, nor the other, are of any avail:

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Properly understood, and justly combined, the object of the Christian Scheme is obtained; the character of the Christian is filled up.

Let then the moral precepts, the Divine discoveries, and the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, have their due place and order, their just and fit proportion, in the Discourses which you address to your people; and, unless my observation have greatly deceived me, one cause, at least, of the desertion of the Church, for the Conventicle, will be entirely removed.

Nor will any power of argument, any force of evidence, have greater probability of operating the conversion of the Infidel himself, than these awakening and consoling Doctrines; so suited to our nature, so adapted to our wants, so refreshing to the heart, oppressed by calamity, corroded by anxiety, or agonized by remorse.

But, my Reverend Brethren, there remains one grand consideration, without due regard to which, though your doctrine be ever so genuine,

ine, and impressive, though "you preach with
 "the tongue of men and of angels," your
 preaching will have little effect: I mean, the
 unspotted purity of your own conduct; the
 sanctity of your own life.—If you would suc-
 cessfully preach the Gospel to others, you must
 feel its vital energy within your own hearts:
 if you would excite devotion in their breasts,
 it must first be kindled in your own: if you
 would effectually enforce the moral precepts of
 your Master, you must not fail to second your
 instructions, by the powerful influence of your
 own example.

If these considerations have their proper weight
 with you, they will lead to important conse-
 quences, in your life, and conversation.

I shall dwell a little longer upon this topic,
 —not as doubting your piety, or discretion,—
 not as conceiving, "that ye do not know these
 "things,—but to stir up your pure mind by
 "way of remembrance."

Let me then, again, remind you of that un-

fortunate error, by which some of our brethren have been induced to believe, that they were recommending the Gospel of Christ to better acceptance among men,—obtaining greater consideration and regard to their own persons,—and paving the way for more effectual success in their Ministry,—by breaking through, in a great measure, all those distinctions, and restraints, by which the wisdom of our ancestors had endeavoured to set apart, and separate the Clergy, as a body disjunct from the Laity, in the Church;—to conceive, I say, that they should effect this, by accommodating themselves to the general manners, and mixing, altogether, in the common modes, and ordinary amusements, of society.

If we consider, for a moment, the *Character*, and *Office*, of a *Minister*, of the *GOSPEL* of *JESUS CHRIST*, we cannot fail to be stricken with surprise, and concern, at so superficial, and so erroneous a conclusion!—What, indeed, is the end of your Commission?—You are placed, as it were, between God, and the world;—

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to call men's attention and affections from things on the earth, and fix them on the things that are in Heaven:—Would this best be done, by proving to every observer, that earthly things are the things of your own most earnest pursuit?—You are to exhort them “not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world:—” would this best be effected, by manifesting to all men, that you dearly love those things yourselves?—You are to preach repentance, self denial, newness of life, a subjugation of appetite and passion, and a strict regard to the cultivation of the pure, and spiritual principle within:—would this be most successfully performed, by indirectly countenancing the things that should be repented of;—and by sharing in every sensual indulgence, which the received customs of civilized society, do not directly condemn?—You are to endeavour to wean them from vanity and folly, from an inordinate love of pleasure, and a too eager pursuit of wealth:—would you be most happy in this endeavour, by partaking their dissipations, going hand in hand with them in all their a-

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mufements, by indulging an idle ambition to support the reign of gaiety, and diffufe the influence of mirth, on the one hand,—or, on the other, by proving that, in a perfect comprehension of your own worldly interefts, and an acute attention to their advancement, you were not a whit behind the moft enterprifing, and the moft able among them?—No, furely.—Afpiring to the honour of being Minifters of the Gofpel, You will forego the poor ambition of being the Minifters of pleafure:—Earneftly defiring to be men of God, you will relinquifh the contemptible vanity of being men of the world.—If in your purfuits, your demeanour, your converfation, your felf indulgence, your amufements, and even in your drefs, you wifhed to fink the difference between yourfelves and other men, as an awkward, ungraceful, and ufelefs diftinction, inimical to eafy gaiety, and focial enjoyment,—if you afpired to the praife of poffeffing no lefs of worldly, than of Heavenly wifdom,—and had rather be thought agreeable, and entertaining companions, than pious, and found Divines,—your ambition might be

be easily satisfied.—The world will be as willing to forget the distinction, as you can be:—it will feel no reluctance to shake off the little remaining constraint, which the respect due to the Clerical character had imposed, and, without check or controul, to pass on in the eager and uninterrupted pursuit of whatever may flatter the imagination, or engage the cupidity of the mind.

In the mean time, what becomes of the responsibility, the awful responsibility, of the Ministers of the Gospel?—Commissioned for the express purpose of checking the progress of vice and folly, how shall they escape, if they indirectly encourage their career?—It will not be denied, that infidelity, profligacy, and dissipation, have made, of late, very rapid strides in the world: and how shall they be checked, at all, if they are, in no wise, checked, by the private example, as well as by the public remonstrances, of our Order?

If we have not all the influence that we ought to have, and that perhaps we might have,

we have some little influence still:—Let it therefore be your care, my Reverend Brethren, by all proper and becoming methods, to increase, and extend this influence: and, as one method of doing so, let me earnestly exhort you to divest yourselves of the ambition of being thought men of the world: to lend yourselves but seldom, and with great moderation, to pursuits merely secular; to scenes of pleasure, and circles of amusement. Let your example concur with your discourses, in recommending that sobriety, regularity, and sanctity, of life, which becomes “the Disciples and followers of Jesus Christ.”

There is a certain limit, fixed, as it were by common consent, up to which the sensual indulgences, the pleasures, and the gaieties of society, are allowed to go, but which a general sense of decorum forbids them to pass. With all their disposition to indulgence, the Laity will always consider the Clerical Profession as imposing certain restraints upon You, to which they do not think themselves obliged to submit: they may properly enough, (they will think,) allow

allow themselves some greater freedom than can decently be assumed by You; and may therefore always exceed that degree of indulgence which they observe that You venture to allow yourselves: If therefore they see you go up to the limit prescribed, they will soon think themselves at liberty to pass it: and thus you will indirectly become the abettors, and fosterers, of every species of extravagance, and dissipation.

I am aware that the prevailing opinion is against me upon this subject.—But a little serious reflection will convince You, that I am right.—Attempts will often be made to divert you from your more serious purpose. Persons without any ill intention, perhaps with a good natured intention, (though with very little reflection) will attempt to laugh you out of what they will call an irksome formality, and a useless restraint. Listen not to such superficial advisers.—They are mistaken in their object:—they even mistake themselves:—for be assured, that if you were to follow their recommendation, they would themselves, in the end, despise you for your compliance.

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However lax people may be in their own morals, however indulgent to their own follies, there are few persons indeed, who do not look with contempt, upon a worldly minded, a volatile, or a dissipated Clergyman.

The duties of your profession, properly pursued, will fill up a large portion of your time: Society may claim, under proper restrictions, another portion of it: for the rest, educated as You have been, You can be at no loss to find, even in privacy, innocent recreation, and rational amusement.

Thus much respecting the danger against which You should be guarded, from the railery, or the persuasion, of injudicious, though not ill meaning companions: As to "those who are without,"—the open enemies, or the pretended friends, (though secret opposers, and maligners) of our Establishment; and those, who in private life, may thwart you in the discharge of your duty, treat you with injustice, or unkindness, refuse you the respect due to your Sacred Character, and the situation You hold

hold in the community; In the lessons of your Divine Master, you may find, if not a remedy for the evil, yet at least a motive for bearing it with tranquillity. Charity, meekness, long suffering, forgiveness of injuries, should distinguish, in a particular manner, the Ministers of the Gospel of Peace. That high, resentful spirit, upon which the children of this world sometimes value themselves, leave to the children of this world,—it is their torment; and their disgrace. Imitate rather the conduct of those true Servants of God, “of whom the world was “not worthy.”—By passing over with magnanimous indifference, the malignant efforts of the enemies of your Profession; by neglecting petty insults; by forgiving real injuries; you will secure the internal peace of your own minds; you will, in many cases, obtain the respect of your adversaries; and in most, disarm them of their enmity: and what is still more, you will, by the efficacy of your example, greatly strengthen the lessons of Christian Charity which You teach; and obtain your reward, if not in the approbation of men, yet certainly in the approbation of God.

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Before

Before I quit the topic of edification by example, I must remind You of the important duty of attending, in an especial manner, to the Religious improvement of those, with whom you are most intimately and closely connected.

The sanctity of the Clerical character, should communicate itself to the family of the Clergyman. How will it be thought that You are in earnest in the duties you inculcate, if those upon whom it would naturally be your first wish to impress them, appear to be insensible to their influence?—If those of your own household, do not benefit by your precepts, how can it be expected that others should be more fortunate, or happy?—Idleness, frivolity, excessive gaiety, extravagance of fashion, voluntarily indulged in the families, and especially in the nearest relatives, of a Minister of the Gospel, would argue either a great want of piety, or a great want of firmness, in the mind of the Minister himself; and therefore obstruct the success of his Ministry, and the efficacy of his own example. Let me therefore exhort You, as well for *their* sakes, as for sake of *the example*, to be-

bestow much care, and attention upon this subject. Do not content yourselves with the bare form of regular family prayer, (which I trust is nowhere omitted), but take occasion to expound to them, in an easy and familiar manner, select portions of the Sacred Scriptures; the important articles of our Faith; the doctrines and precepts of our Saviour. Thus shall your Wives, your Children and your Servants, not only grow in grace and wisdom, under your instructions, but also materially assist you in the great work of your ministry; by giving at once a proof, and an exemplification, both of the sincerity, and of the efficacy, of your zeal for the Truth.

In fine, my Brethren, be but in earnest in your desire to promote the salvation of men, by the Gospel of Jesus Christ; lay but to heart the importance of your Office, the extent of your duties, the momentous consequences, both to yourselves and others, annexed to the discharge, or neglect, of those duties;—cherish but in your minds a sincere love of your Divine

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Master, and an honest ambition, in your humble measure, to carry forward the great work of Redemption, which He hath begun upon earth;—and, in spite of the discouragements, and difficulties that may surround You; in spite of the efforts of profligacy, and the machinations of infidelity; You shall yet, by His Grace, and with His Blessing, reap the full fruits of your faithful, and unremitted exertions.—Even though You should go on your way, now, with labour and sorrow, yet, “bearing forth good seed, you shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring your sheaves with you.”

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